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SUBJECT: AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK TO FINANCE BRIDGE
CONNECTING SENEGAL AND MAURITANIA

¶1. During a recent visit to Senegal, the President of the African Development Bank Group (AfDB) announced the Bank's plans to provide financial support for the construction of a bridge at Rosso, on the Senegal River, which will link Senegal and Mauritania. The project of building a bridge over the Senegal River, at the border between Senegal and Mauritania, has been discussed for years but never seemed to advance for various reasons -- mostly political. In fact, it featured prominently in former Mauritanian President Taya's official visit to Senegal in 2005. It seems now that Senegal and Mauritania have overcome their political differences and are committed to move the project forward. This is a significant step forward given that in 1989, what started with squabbling between Mauritanian and Senegalese herders over grazing at the border ignited into a conflict that has left deep scars among the populations.

¶2. The erection of the Rosso bridge falls within the parameters of promoting regional and sub-regional integration, largely spelled out in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an initiative spearheaded by African leaders and designed to address the current challenges facing the African continent, such as escalating poverty and underdevelopment. One of the pillars of NEPAD remains the strengthening of regional integration through infrastructure development. The road between Dakar and Tangier, viewed by Senegal and Morocco as a way to accelerate intra-African trade and also trade with Europe, will become fully operational only when the current delays at the Rosso ferry become history, something that the Rosso bridge aims to accomplish.

¶3. Senegal is an active member of the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River Basin (OMVS), which was established to implement development programs built around the water resources shared by Mauritania, Senegal and Mali.

¶4. U.S. companies interested in this upcoming project should be on the look out and consult with AfDB and with OMVS. The scope of work will range from consulting to construction and engineering. The AfDB and OMVS may be contacted at the following addresses:

-- African Development Bank - AfDB

Kristel Fredrikson, Liaison Officer

African Development Bank
Angle des trois rues: Avenue du Ghana, Rue Pierre de
Coubertin, Rue Hedi Nour
BP 323 1002
Tunis Belvedere
Tunisia
Tel: (216)71-333-511 or (216)71-103-450
Fax: (216)71-351-933
Email: afdb@afdb.org

-- OMVS

Mouhamed Salem Ould Merzoug
High Commissioner
46, Rue Carnot x Mohamed V
Tel: (221) 823-4530
Fax: (221) 823-4762 or (221) 822-0163
E-mail: omvssphc@sentoo.sn

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